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ABSTRACT

Historically, it has been generally accepted that the evaluation of teaching competencies should be conducted by an administrator or a master teacher. There is a body of literature, however, that expresses the idea that self-assessment may also be a valuable source of information despite the uncontrollable defense mechanisms that may be inherent in the process. Using the Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments (TPAI) developed by the Georgia Teacher Assessment Project, researchers at the Falk Laboratory School at the University of Pittsburgh have collected, over a 2-year period, both self-evaluation data and expert assessment data from 22 graduate interns in the Master of Arts in Teaching program and the master teachers to whom they were assigned. This study's purposes are to report the relationships between the intern's self-evaluation and the master teacher's expert assessment and to determine whether the self-evaluation process revealed quantifiable growth in competency acquisition. Graphs illustrate comparative scores achieved on novice teacher versus master teacher evaluations. (Author/JD)

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THE USEFULNESS AND ACCURACY OF SELF EVALUATION OF TEACHING COMPETENCIES

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Introduction

Evaluating teacher performance is certainly not a new trend. However, what is new is the intense interest in the past ten years to improve ways of evaluating teachers (Oldham, 1974). Teacher performance evaluation has become an increasingly controversial issue. Early in the history of teacher performance appraisal, educators were evaluated on the basis of traits or characteristics (presage variables). These characteristics may or may not have been related to performance, and as yet no significant body of knowledge attests to the fact that effective teaching performance is dependent on specific traits. Consequently, many of us discarded this form of evaluation.

Teacher evaluation has taken on many different complexions; from process rating scales that evaluated classroom interactions to product evaluation that evaluated teachers on the basis of student achievement. Currently, teacher evaluation strongly emphasizes evaluating performance competencies (Oliva & Henson, 1980; Johnson, 1978. It is generally accepted that performance competency evaluation be done by a "superior" or "expert", e.g.,Principal, Director, Superintendent. Performance-based evaluation is seen to have several distinct advantages. First, identifying performance competencies enables the evaluatee to

know what is expected. Secondly, once competencies are identified, weaknesses can be pinpointed.

Presently several states have moved toward beginning teacher performance evaluation through the use of the Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments (TPAI). The TPAI was created by the Georgia Teacher Assessment Project and took approximately four years to develop and test. The TPAI focuses on teacher competence in areas such as (1) the teacher's competence in planning instruction and choosing materials to achieve instructional objectives; (2) the teacher's cognitive interaction with learners as well as skill in organizing and presenting instructional activities, and finally (3) the teacher's interpersonal skills in regard to classroom climate and performance during instruction (Tanner & Ebers, 1985).

The Falk Laboratory School at the University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has been involved in a research project for the past five years which has utilized the TPAI in the performance evaluation of Master of Arts in Teaching interns. One objective of this longitudinal study was to get the beginning teachers more directly involved in the evaluation process (In the setting of a laboratory school, our objective has been to transcend the evaluation process and make it more of a growth process).

Some areas of the literature on teaching evaluation have proposed that, in order to judge teaching competency, the teacher himself/herself may be the best source of information. However, it is quite obvious that there may be uncontrollable

defensiveness built into evaluation based on 'self evaluation' (Pine & Boy, 1975).

Objectives

A major goal of our recent work has been to investigate the accuracy and usefulness of self evaluation using portions of the TPAI. The objectives of the present study were, first, to determine how well the self evaluation correlated with that of an expert and second, to determine if quantifiable growth in competencies occurred by comparing a self evaluation at the beginning of the school year with a self evaluation at the end of the year.

Sample

The sample included twenty-two graduate interns involved in the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program. The MAT Internship in Elementary Education is a graduate program in the Department of Instruction and Learning, School of Education, University of Pittsburgh. The program is comprised of forty-two credits. It extends over four terms beginning with the Summer Session, and continues for a full calendar year. During this year the intern spends each week of the school year at Falk School, the University's laboratory school. The 180 day clinical experience at the laboratory school involves teaching responsibilities during school hours which are monitored by the master teacher to

whom each intern is assigned and formal classes held after school hours. The MAT program is a graduate internship designed for college graduates with degrees in liberal arts, education or other professional fields. Successful completion of the Internship Program earns the candidate a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree and application for a Pennsylvania Instructional I Teaching Certificate.

Data Collection

Each MAT intern (novice) was evaluated by the master teacher (expert) to whom he/she was assigned. The instruments used to assess performance competencies of the interns were the Teacher Performance Assessment Instruments (TPAI) Specifically, the three sections employed were the Teaching Plans and Materials,(TPM), the Classroom Procedures, (CP), and the Interpersonal Skills, (IS), instruments. The first assessment using the TPM, CP, and IS was conducted in the fall, and the second in the spring. Following the Conditions for Use of the TPAI, the fall assessment was begun after the 20th school day (actual day of instruction), and was completed on or before the 70th school day. The spring assessment was begun after the 110th school day, with completion on or before the 160th school day (Capie, 1979, p. 20).

Each intern (novice) completed a self evaluation of his/her teaching competencies using the above mentioned time line. The instrument used to assess self evaluation of teaching competencies was the Competency Perception Survey, (CPS), which

was designed specifically for this study. The CPS was constructed from the TPAI.

In the TPAI format, each of the three subtests utilizes competency statements, indicators, and descriptors. Competency statements are broad statements of responsible performance essential to the effective professional conduct of all teacher (Capie, 1979). Competency indicators are used in order to define behaviors representative of the competency. Descriptors, more specific than either competency statements and indicators, assess to what degree the competency is possessed the teacher. Descriptors are usually expressed in sentence format and scaled from 1 to 5;1 being the lowest rating, and 5 being the highest

For example, a competency statement from the CP reads as follows: COMMUNICATES WITH LEARNERS. The indicator states: Provides Feedback to Learners Throughout the Lesson. The descriptors state:

1. Accepts learner comments or performance without feedback about their adequacy.

2 Responds to negative aspects of student work, but few comments are made about positive aspects.

3. Inform students of the adequacy of their performance. Few errors pass by without being addressed.

4 Helps learners evaluate the adequacy of their own performance.

5. In addition to 4, the teacher probes for the source of misunderstandings which arise.

The content of the CPS was structured to incorporate a

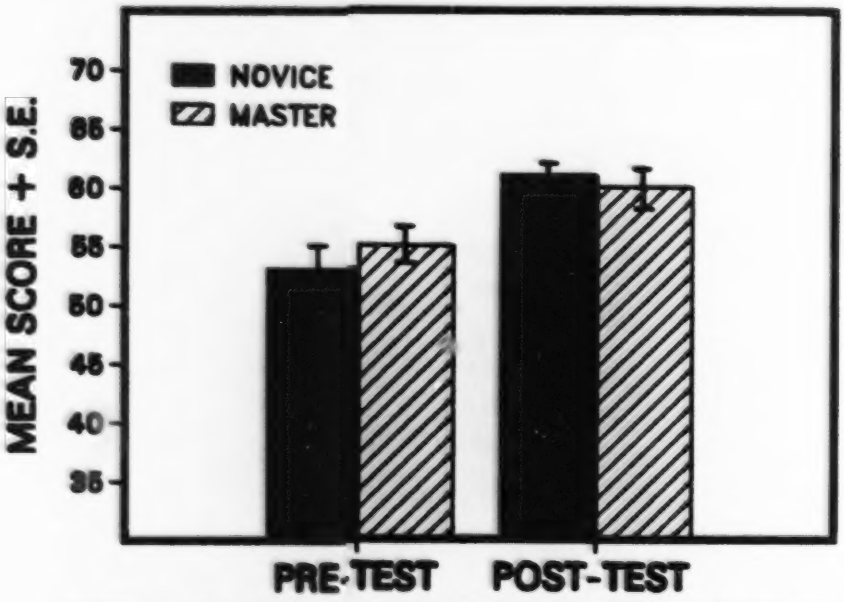
representative sample of teaching competencies contained in the TPM, CP, and IS instruments. The fourteen competency statements included in these instruments form the item content of the CPS. Specific statement indicators from each of the fourteen competency statements were randomly selected by means of a Table of Random Digits. These randomly selected indicators formed the representative sample of teaching competencies contained in the fourteen items of the CPS. The fourteen indicators were listed in the same order as they appeared on the respective TPAI, and directions were specified as to how each item should be rated. The ratings were done in a nonthreatening manner. It was common knowledge to all interns that the self evaluation would be confidential and would have no influence on course work grades

Results

Pre-test as well as post-test scores determined by the novice and expert were not significantly different (Figure 1). While there was no difference between the novice and expert in the total scores achieved there were significant differences in the tallies for individual questions (a significant interaction occurred between test question and rater experience as determined by analysis of variance). On the pre-test two questions were rated differently by the novice and expert (Figure 2) and on the post-test there were also two questions that were rated differently (Figure 3).

When the total scores of pre-test and post=test rated by the

FIGURE 1. COMPARISON OF TOTAL SCORES ACHIEVED ON NOVICE VERSUS MASTER EVALUATION



TOTAL SCORES ON PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST

FIGURE 2. PRE-TEST - COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES ACHIEVED ON NOVICE VERSUS MASTER EVALUATION

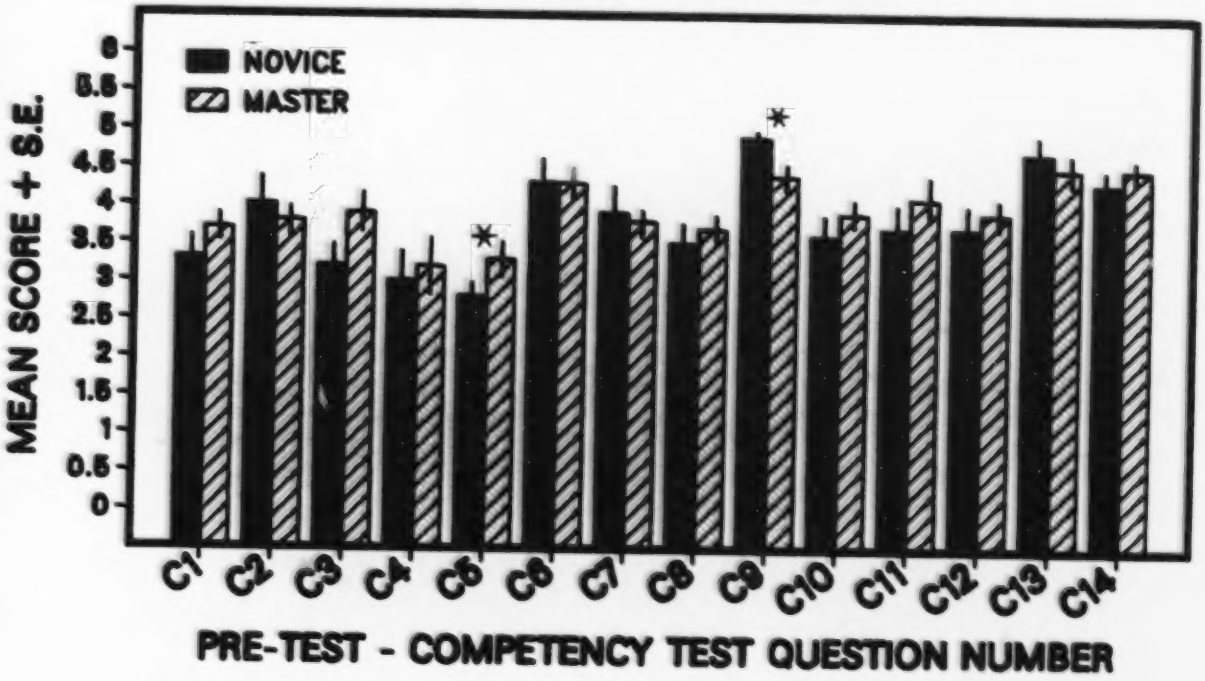
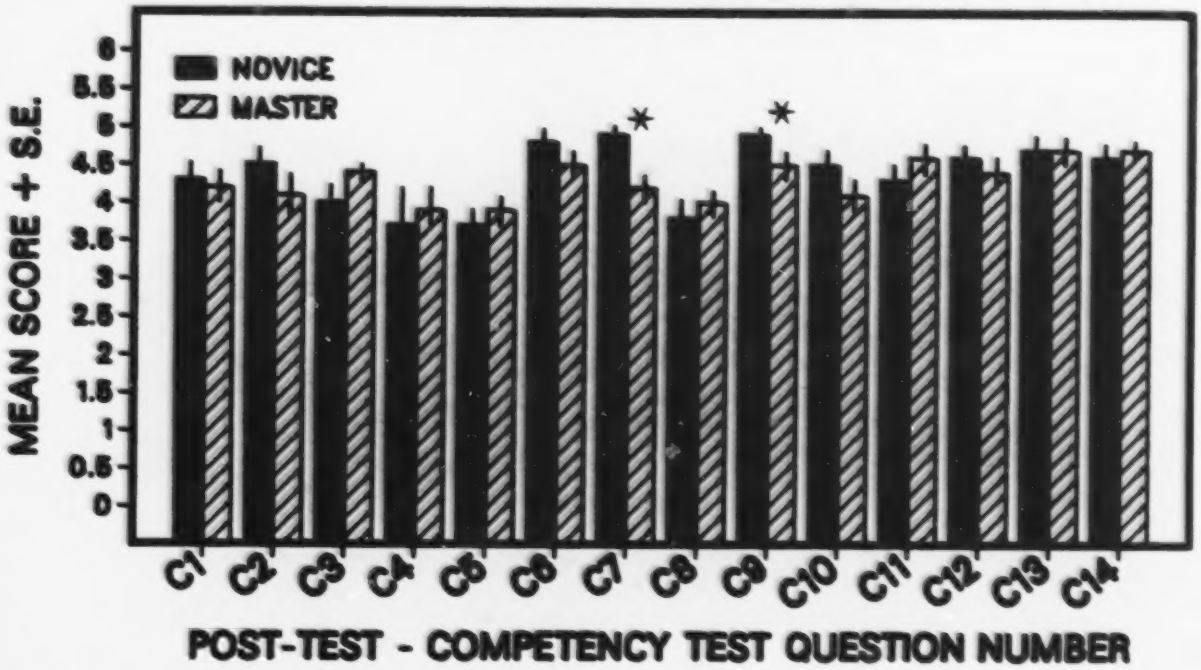


FIGURE 3. POST-TEST - COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES ACHIEVED ON NOVICE VERSUS MASTER EVALUATION



novice are compared there was a significant improvement (Figure 4). Similarly, master teachers rated the novices as having shown significant improvement from the beginning to the end of the school year. Moreover, there was no statistical difference in the ratings performed by the master and novice teacher.

Novices rated themselves as having shown significant improvement in eight of fourteen variables (Figure 5), whereas, the master rated significant improvement in only three (Figure 6).

Conclusions

The results of the present study suggest that the self-evaluation of competencies by novice teachers is an accurate marker of improvement. This conclusion is supported by two statistically significant findings. First, total scores for evaluation by the novice and expert were not statistically differently on either the pre- or post-test. And second, both novice and expert recognized that there was a quantifiable improvement in competency level from the beginning to the end of the one year internship program.

Because the ratings of the novice and expert were not different it appears that defensiveness on the part of the novice did not affect the evaluation process. The assurance of confidentiality may have minimized the development of a defensive attitude during the self-evaluation process.

The perception of deficiencies as well as strengths were

FIGURE 4. COMPARISON OF TOTAL SCORES ACHIEVED ON PRE-TEST VERSUS POST-TEST AS DETERMINED BY A NOVICE OR MASTER

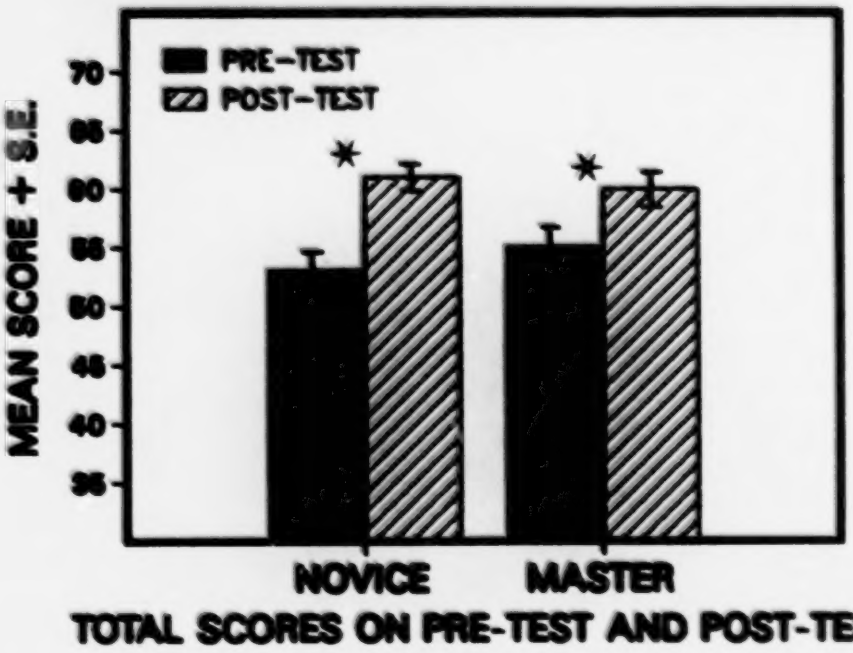


FIGURE 6. NOVICE - COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES ACHIEVED ON PRE-TEST VERSUS POST-TEST

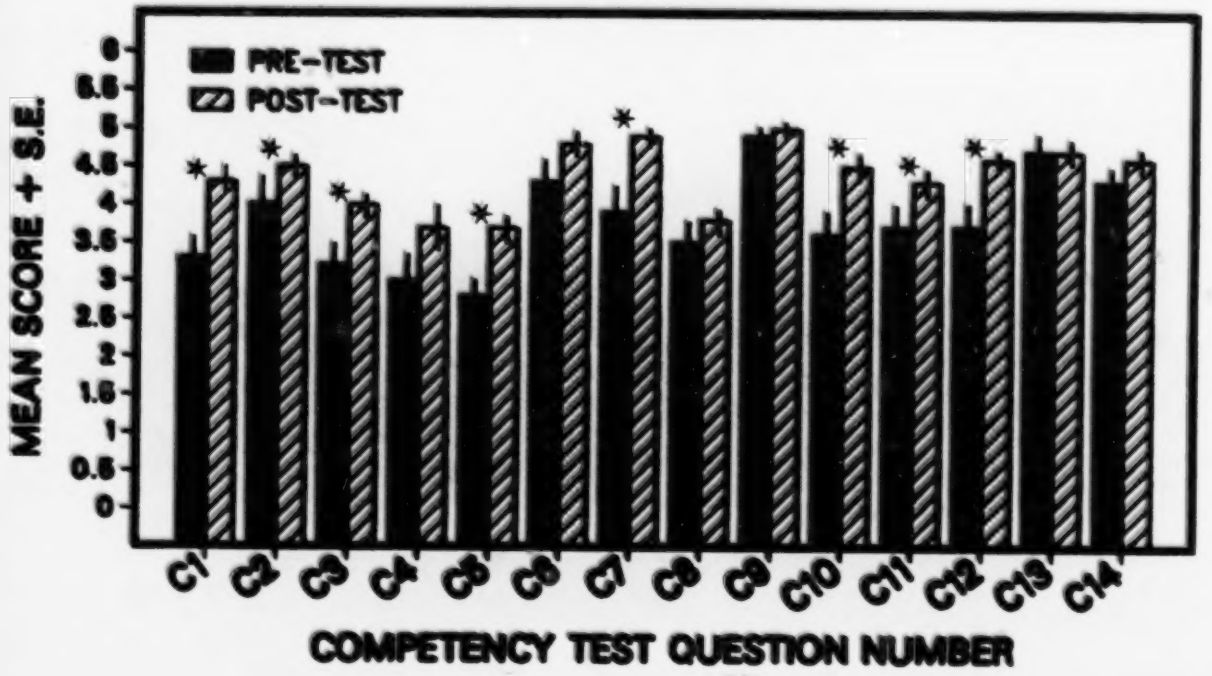
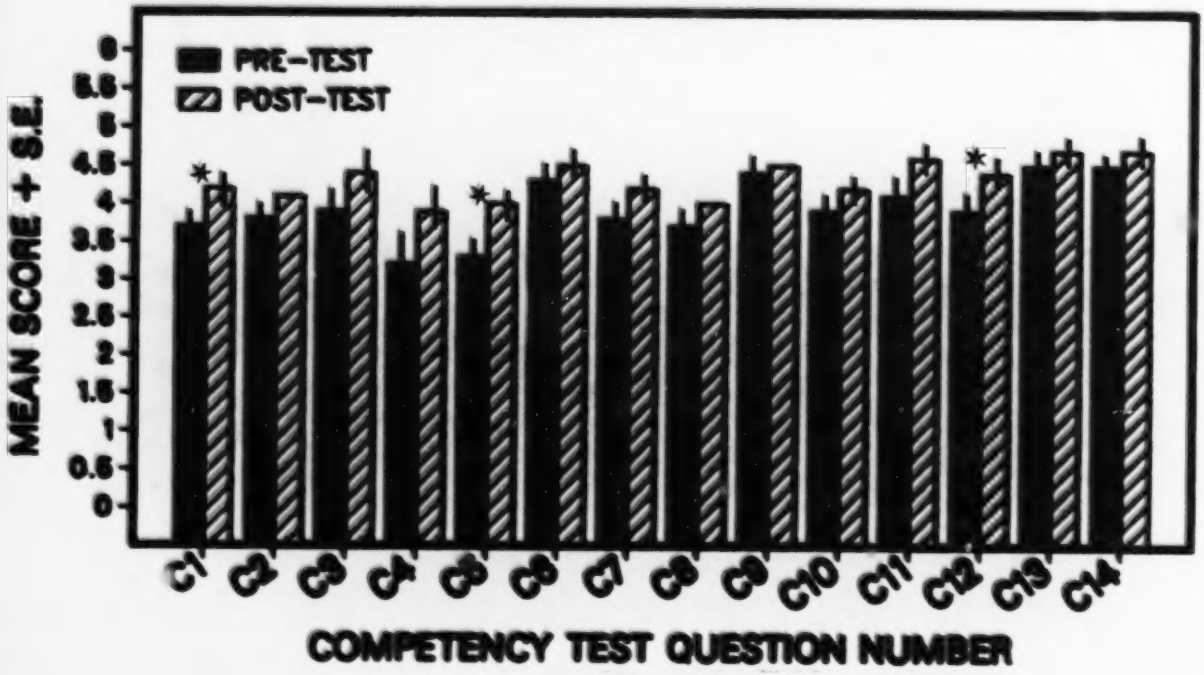


FIGURE 6. MASTER - COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES ACHIEVED ON PRE-TEST VERSUS POST-TEST



similar between the master teacher and the novice. An additional advantage of the self-evaluation system is that it provides a framework for formally identifying areas where it is expected that competencies be generated.

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